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JUSTIFY RETURNS TO THE TRACK; GALLOPS 1 3/8 MILES AT CHURCHILL DOWNS

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (Thursday, May 24, 2018) – WinStar Farm, China Horse Club, Head of Plains Partners and Starlight Racing's undefeated Kentucky Derby Presented by Woodford Reserve (Grade I) and Preakness Stakes (GI) winner **Justify** returned to the track Thursday at Churchill Downs for the first time since returning to Louisville Sunday after his half-length win in the Preakness.

During a special training period from 7:30-7:40 a.m. (all times Eastern) for horses preparing for the third jewel of racing's Triple Crown, the June 9 Belmont Stakes (GI), Justify galloped 1 3/8 miles with regular exercise rider **Homberto Gomez** aboard.

"We definitely saw what we needed to see," Hall of Fame trainer **Bob Baffert**'s assistant **Jimmy Barnes** said. "He had a good bounce to his step and he was very happy out there. Bob told me to make sure he has a nice and easy first day back galloping. He went about 1 3/8 miles and seemed to enjoy it."

Justify is following a similar post-Preakness training pattern that Baffert's previous Triple Crown hopefuls – **Silver Charm** (1997), **Real Quiet** (1998), **War Emblem** (2002) and Triple Crown winner **American Pharoah** (2015) – went through. Each of Baffert's Derby and Preakness winners trained at Churchill Downs before shipping to New York for the Belmont.

"I try not to think too much about the Triple Crown," Barnes said. "I just try to focus on the next day of training. I'm sure I'll start thinking about it when we ship to Belmont. My biggest job is to keep Justify happy."

Baffert is expected to be at Churchill Downs later this weekend, according to Barnes.

Also training Thursday during the special window for Belmont horses were Preakness runner-up **Bravazo**, who jogged two miles with exercise rider **Danielle Rosier** aboard for Hall of Fame trainer **D. Wayne Lukas**, and Preakness third **Tenfold**, who galloped about 1 1/2 miles with **Angel Garcia** for fellow Hall of Fame conditioner **Steve Asmussen**.

The Belmont Stakes field could possibly be comprised of the following 11 horses (with trainer): **Audible** (Todd Pletcher), **Bandua** (Dermot Weld), **Blended Citizen** (Doug O'Neill), **Bravazo** (D. Wayne Lukas), **Free Drop Billy** (Dale Romans), **Gronkowski** (Chad Brown), **Hofburg** (Bill Mott), **Justify** (Baffert), **Restoring Hope** (Baffert), **Tenfold** (Steve Asmussen) and **Vino Rosso** (Pletcher).

Only 12 horses have swept the Triple Crown: **Sir Barton** (1919), **Gallant Fox** (1930), **Omaha** (1935), **War Admiral** (1937), **Whirlaway** (1941), **Count Fleet** (1943), **Assault** (1946), **Citation** (1948), **Secretariat** (1973), **Seattle Slew** (1977), **Affirmed** (1978) and **American Pharoah** (2015).

To watch Justify's return to the track: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=htzZSnoOe40>.

FANS CAN WATCH JUSTIFY TRAIN IN PERSON OR ONLINE – With unbeaten Triple Crown hopeful **Justify** and four other possible Belmont Stakes contenders stabled on the grounds, Churchill Downs Racetrack is conducting a special 7:30-7:40 a.m. (all times Eastern) training period for those horses.

Area horse racing fans are invited to watch those colts train from the first floor of the facility free of charge. Churchill Downs Racetrack will open its Paddock Gate entrance between 7-8 a.m. each morning through Monday, June 4 so the public can watch Kentucky Derby and Preakness winner Justify along with rivals **Bravazo**, **Free Drop Billy**, **Restoring Hope** and **Tenfold** prepare for the 1 1/2-mile third jewel of horse racing's Triple Crown – the 150th running of the \$1.5 million Belmont Stakes (Grade I) on Saturday, June 9.

Guests may park free of charge in the Orange and Black Lots outside of the Paddock Gate.

Video of the exercises will be shown on the Big Board and infield video screens at Churchill Downs. Those unable to attend can watch an online live stream of the daily exercises with commentary at www.KentuckyDerby.com/Works from 7:20-7:45 a.m. through Monday, June 4, thanks to **TwinSpires.com**, the country's leading online and mobile betting platform and official betting partner of Churchill Downs, the Kentucky Derby and Breeders' Cup World Championships. Also, clips of the activity will be uploaded on the Kentucky Derby YouTube channel.

The special 7:30-7:40 a.m. training period over a freshly-harrowed and congestion-free track will follow the 7-7:30 a.m. renovation break. It will remain in place through Tuesday, June 5 – the date many of the Belmont Stakes contenders will ship to New York. Training hours at Churchill Downs are 5:30-10 a.m. daily.

FRENCH NATIVE GEROUX BECOMES U.S. CITIZEN – Locally-based jockey **Florent Geroux**, a native of Argentan, France, became naturalized as a United States citizen Wednesday afternoon.

“It’s a great honor,” Geroux said. “It’s truly home here. I’m very happy that I passed the test and was able to officially become an American.”

“The timing was quite interesting for the test,” agent **Doug Bredar** said. “(Geroux) was scheduled to ride **Gun Runner** in the Pegasus World Cup (at Gulfstream Park in Florida) but the test was the day before in Chicago. Thankfully he passed the test and his flight got to Gulfstream on time. Then, the naturalization ceremony was in Bowling Green, Ky. during the last week of the Fall Meet at Keeneland where we were battling for leading rider. We got lucky there was another ceremony (Wednesday) in Louisville.”

Geroux, 31, spent more than 22 years in France before coming to the U.S. in 2007 to work for trainer **Patrick Biancone**. However, an injury at Keeneland sidelined Geroux for several months and he went back to France while he recovered.

In 2010, Geroux returned to the U.S. and was based in Chicago for five years until he moved to Kentucky in 2015.

Geroux began Thursday with eight Spring Meet wins at Churchill Downs, most notably a half-length triumph with **Monomoy Girl** in the Longines Kentucky Oaks (G1).

GOLDEN MISCHIEF MADE 2-1 MORNING LINE FAVE FOR SATURDAY’S WINNING COLORS – **Juddmonte Farms’** multiple stakes-winning filly **Golden Mischief** heads a field of six fillies as the 2-1 morning line favorite in Saturday’s 15th running of the \$100,000 Winning Colors (GIII) at Churchill Downs.

“I had her this winter at Oaklawn and she really impressed me,” trainer **Brad Cox’s** Churchill Downs-based assistant **Jorje Abrego** said. “She’ll be really tough in this spot. She’s won stakes races before but hasn’t won a graded stakes. Hopefully Saturday she can add that to her résumé.”

The six-furlong Winning Colors, which honors the Hall of Fame filly that prevailed against colts in the 1988 Kentucky Derby, is an annual Memorial Day weekend fixture and one of two stakes events on Saturday’s 11-race program. Churchill Downs’ first race is 12:45 p.m. (all times Eastern). The Winning Colors goes as Race 10 at approximately 5:26 p.m. and the sixth running of the \$70,000-added Keertana Overnight Stakes, a 1 ½-mile grass marathon for fillies and mares, is the third race at approximately 1:43 p.m.

Golden Mischief (17-7-3-0—\$406,730) scored an emphatic 8 ¼-length victory on April 4 at Oaklawn Park in a six-furlong allowance race with a final time of 1:08.60. The 4-year-old daughter of Into Mischief, who was previously trained by **Steve Asmussen**, is a three-time stakes winner but is in search of her first graded stakes triumph. Jockey **Florent Geroux** has the call and will break from Post 2.

The Winning Colors field from the rail out (with jockeys, assigned weights and morning line odds): **Brave Daisey** (Rogelio Miranda, 116 pounds, 20-1); **Golden Mischief** (Geroux, 120, 2-1); **Pinch Hit** (Robby Albarado, 120, 4-1); **Treble** (Ricardo Santana Jr., 122, 3-1); **Miss Kentucky** (Brian Hernandez Jr., 120, 3-1); and **Golden Domer** (Corey Lanerie, 120, 4-1).

DARING DUCHESS HEAVY 4-5 MORNING LINE FAVORITE IN KEERTANA – **Ken and Sarah Ramsey’s** multiple stakes-winning mare **Daring Duchess** leads a field of seven fillies and mares as the 4-5 morning line favorite in Saturday’s sixth running of the \$70,000-added Keertana Overnight Stakes at 1 ½ miles on Churchill Downs’ Matt Winn Turf Course.

The Keertana was named for **Barbara Hunter’s** homebred **Keertana**, who won four of her nine starts at Churchill Downs, including a nose triumph over males in the \$111,200 Louisville Handicap (Grade III) in 2011.

A former \$35,000 claim in 2016 for the Ramseys and trainer **Mike Maker**, Daring Duchess won the 2017 Keertana by three lengths. Jockey **Corey Lanerie** has the call on the five-time winner and will break from Post 2.

The field for the Keertana, which goes as Race 3 at approximately 1:43 p.m. (all times Eastern): **Sunday Strait** (Sammy Camacho Jr., 50-1); **Daring Duchess** (Lanerie, 4-5); **Araminta** (Ricardo Santana Jr., 10-1); **Creative Thinking** (Adam Beschizza, 4-1); **Tweety Show** (James Graham, 15-1); **La Manta Gris** (Brian Hernandez Jr., 7-2) and **Galilea** (Robby Albarado, 8-1). All horses will carry 121 pounds.

MEET LEADERS – Is there a mild upset brewing in the Spring Meet jockey standings at Churchill Downs? Through the first 14 days of the 38-day meet, jockey **Brian Hernandez Jr.** had a 22-16-win lead over 15-time leading rider **Corey Lanerie**. **Julien Leparoux** and **Ricardo Santana Jr.** were tied for third with 10 victories. ... There was a three-way tie atop the trainer standings between **Steve Asmussen**, **Kenny McPeck** and **Ian Wilkes** with eight wins. ... Churchill Downs’ all-time leading owners **Ken and Sarah Ramsey** had a 4-3 win margin over **Whitham Thoroughbreds**. 11 owners were tied for third with two wins.

DOWN THE STRETCH – With Memorial Day on Monday, Churchill Downs will have a special five-day holiday week of racing (with first race post time, number of races): Thursday (5 p.m., 8 races), Friday (12:45 p.m., 9 races), Saturday (12:45 p.m., 11 races), Sunday (12:45 p.m., 9 races) and Memorial Day Monday (12:45 p.m., 9 races). The Twilight Thursday abbreviated eight-race program is highlighted by \$1 draft beers, food trucks, live music on the Plaza stage by **Fela Booty**, who will provide African-style American funk and jazz. There also is a \$460,789 jackpot carryover for the 20-cent minimum Single 6 Jackpot on Races 3-8. ... In celebration of Memorial Day on Monday, all active and retired members of the United States armed forces will be admitted free of charge. Also, Churchill Downs' bugler **Steve Buttleman** will perform patriotic melodies following the "Call to the Post" for each race. ... **"Inside Churchill Downs"** will air Friday at 6 p.m. on **ESPN 680/105.7**. The one-hour horse racing radio show is co-hosted by Churchill Downs Racetrack's **John Asher**, **Darren Rogers** and **Kevin Kerstein** and delivers a wide-ranging list of interesting guests, from jockeys, trainers, owners to well-informed handicappers and other industry insiders. Those outside the Louisville radio market can listen live online at <http://www.espnloouisville.com/> or via podcast on the station's website or <https://soundcloud.com/>.

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